countries is based on abiding and commonly shared concerns such as the need for expanded bilateral trade and investment, cooperation in the promotion of international peace and security, disarmament, development and environmental conservation, for which a large measure of bipartisan support exists in the US Congress.

As part of their normal functions, our Ambassador and other Mission Officials maintain regular contact with a wide circle of Senators and Congressmen and their Staffers of both the Democratic and Republican parties, and provide them extensive briefings and material on issues of relevence to Indo-US relations. Our Mission shall actively pursue such interactions with Congress particularly with the elected members. As in the last Congress, the new Congress includes many Republicans who have been supportive of strengthening Indo-US friendship and understanding. A very large proportion of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans have been re-elected, several of whom are Republicans. Government have been encouraging members of Congress and their Staffers to visit India to gain a better understanding of India and mutual benefits of strengthening indo-US relations. An expanded programme of such high-level exchanges between our legislatures is being worked out.

Poaching of one Horned Rhino in Kaziranga National Park, Assam

1078. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons for not taking any effective steps to prevent poaching of one-horned Rhino in the Kaziranga National Park in Assam.

(b) whether Government are aware that due to regular poaching this rare species of world famous animal will extinct in the near future; and

(c) whether Government will direct the Assam Government to take effective measures to prevent poaching and monitor by a Central Agency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) Despite several measuers taken by the Government, rhino poaching in Kaziranga National Park had become a serious problem. Rhino are killed mainly due to the great demand of rhino horns abroad for its ascribed medicinal values and for use as dagger handles. However, due to preventive measures taken by the Government there has been a decline in poaching cases in the last two years as may be seen from the following figures;

Year	1992	1993	1994 (Upto November, 94)
No. of Rhinos killed . . .	48	40	10

The measures taken by the Government to protect the Rhino population include:

(i) Rhino is placed in Schedule I of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 getting the highest level of protection.

(ii) Trading in Rhino parts, and products is also banned by law.

(iii) A network of Wildlife Santuaries and National Parks has been set up for conservation of the species and its habitat. Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government for development of national parks and sanctuaries.

(iv) Central Assistance has been provided to the State for strengthening anti-

poaching infrastructure and extension of Kaziranga Park area.

(v) Cooperation of police, BSF DRI and Army is also taken as and when required, in apprehending the poachers and illegal traders.

(vi) India is a member of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna-(CITES) and abides by the regulations of international trade in on dangered Species of animals and articles made thereof under the provisions of the Convention.

(vii) Wtih the view to providing alternative home for Rhinos and also to rehabilitating them in their erstwhile habitat, scheme for 'Rehabilitation of Rhinos' has been started in Dudhwar National Park in Uttar Pradesh;

(viii) National Action Plan for Conservation of Rhino in India has been prepared and efforts are being made to seek international assistance.

वाह और सागर सिंचाई परियोजनाओं को स्वीकृति प्रदान किया जाना

1079. **श्री दिलीप सिंह जूदेव** : क्या **पर्यावरण और वन** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार ने मध्य प्रदेश सरकार द्वारा भेजी गई वाह और सागर सिंचाई परियोजनाओं को स्वीकृति प्रदान कर दी है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है ;

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं ,

(घ) क्या गत तीन वर्ष के दौरान सरकार को इस संबंध में संसद सदस्यों से कोई अभ्यावेदन प्राप्त हुआ है ; और

(ङ) यदि हां, तो उनका ब्यौरा क्या है और इस संबंध में सरकार ने क्या कार्यवाही की है ?

पर्यावरण और वन मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री कमल नाथ) : (क) से (ग) संजय सागर (वाह) सिंचाई परियोजना के निर्माण के प्रस्ताव को वन (संरक्षण) अधिनियम, 1980 और पर्यावरण की दृष्टि से गुण-दोषों के आधार पर अस्वीकृत किया गया है । इस प्रस्ताव की विस्तृत जांच करने के पश्चात् पर्यावरण पर इसके प्रतिकूल प्रभाव और पर्याप्त पुनर्वास के बिना अनेक लोगों में विस्थापन के कारण इसे अस्वीकृत किया गया है ।

(घ) और (ङ) गत तीन वर्षों के दौरान इस प्रस्ताव पर पुनर्विचार करने के लिये संसद सदस्यों से पत्र प्राप्त हुए हैं । इन पत्रों की प्राप्ति के पश्चात् राज्य सरकार से इस प्रस्ताव के पुनर्विचार के लिये कतिपय ब्यौरे भेजने का अनुरोध किया गया है । ये ब्यौरे अभी तक राज्य सरकार से प्राप्त नहीं हुए हैं ।

Dabhol Power Project

1080. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the environmentalists, at a public hearing of controversial Dabhol Power Project in Bombay, have asked Government to increase the safety zone of the project in the light of the disaster in Egypt recently killing over 400 people, if so, the details thereof; and